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Declassified Case: NW# 78134 Date:
08-25-2025

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with President
Vladimir Putin of Russia

PARTICIPANT: President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko
Notetakers : Troy Ewing, Alexandra Hadley,
Jessica Rowell

DATE, TIME November 20, 2007, 9:40-9:52 a.m. EST
AND PLACE: Oval Office

President Bush: How are you, Mr. President? (U)

President Putin: I am very glad to hear from you. Everything
is okay. (U)

President Bush: Good. Well, you sound good. (U)

President Putin: [REDACTED] b(6)
(U)

President Bush: Very briefly, as you know the Annapolis
conference is starting next week followed by the Moscow
conference, which you have kindly offered to host, and I thank
you for that. I just wanted to tell you that I am cautiously
optimistic that they will come up with a two-state solution that
leads to peace and will give the Palestinians the necessary
courage to move forward. I hope the Arab world will come. You
won't have a final agreement, of course, but negotiations will
start. That's what I wanted to share with you. The Moscow
meeting would then be an important moment to see where people
are in the process. (U)

President Putin: George, I would like to thank you for this
call. I am very glad to hear you and I would like to

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Classified by: John I. Pray, Jr.

Reason: 1.4(d)

Declassify on: 11/26/17

NW#: 78134 DocId: 34685377

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(congratulate you on the nearing holiday that is Thanksgiving.
(U)

President Bush: Thank you. (U)

President Putin: I hope you have the opportunity to have a little rest. (U)

I also think that the Moscow meeting, if it takes place, could make a contribution toward a settlement, but I must tell you that I didn't think about that when I made an active decision to support you on Annapolis. I believe that your efforts, persistent and continuous, are welcome and it was my wish to help you. I believe that this course is very correct. So, we took up the initiative to help you organize this meeting. (S)

(We talked to Abbas when he came to Moscow. In the beginning of November, I sent Mr. Primakov over to the Middle East to meet with the Palestinians, Syrians, and Israelis. The general outcome of this meeting with Abbas, Barak, Mubarak, and others was that the Arabs told him there is hope for a settlement. But you know that both Abbas and Olmert have domestic difficulties. This will make the situation more difficult. Anyway, it is important that Annapolis provides a bridge for further steps. The Primakov report says that under certain circumstances Syria and Hamas could take certain steps and that there is some room for flexibility. As a result of this mission and meetings in Damascus, both Hamas and the Syrians said they would postpone the alternative conference plan for November. We tried to convince them that it was not good, and it was bad for the interests of their nations. We had the impression that they agreed with us. (S)

(It is our view that the participation of Syria and Lebanon in the meeting in Annapolis would be very useful even if the problem on the Golan Heights will not be discussed. This could be a bridge to a full scale international conference. This is what we have been doing recently. Of course, there are claims on the sides of both the Arabs and Israelis, and as you know Israel continues building the barrier and settlement activity. Also, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is deteriorating quickly. There is concern about ideas expressed in certain Israeli quarters that they would like to have large scale military operations in Gaza right after Annapolis, which makes the issue difficult. And we should not forget in the meeting about the split in the Palestinian Authority. All of our contact demonstrates the prospect for a Palestinian-Israeli

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(settlement is not a utopia. I would like to tell you that Russia would like to support your initiative because it is right and very timely. (C)

President Bush: Yes, thanks a lot. I appreciate that, my friend. I also appreciate your briefing on what Primakov reported to you. Of course we will keep you posted after the Annapolis meeting on how I see the progress. And I thank you very much for encouraging the Arab nations to send their foreign ministers. That is very helpful. I appreciate Lavrov's efforts on your behalf. (S)

President Putin: Well, we have no doubts and we will go hand-in-hand on this. (S)

President Bush: Thank you very much, and good luck in the Duma elections. (U)

(President Putin: Thank you, George. Thank you very much. In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about the visit to Moscow by Secretaries Rice and Gates. They gave us a few ideas concerning Missile Defense and we thought the ideas were not bad. They promised to send a written proposal but we haven't received it yet. (S)

President Bush: Okay, we will get that to you. We owe you something. They were very optimistic when they came back. Thank you for bringing that to my attention. I will get you the written proposal. (S)

President Putin: Thank you very much, George. Okay, we shall be waiting for it and getting ready for the meeting in Washington at the end of November. (S)

President Bush: Thank you, and I wish you the best.. Spasibo. I am practicing my Russian. (U)

President Putin: Thank you, and best of luck to you from all our friends. (U)

President Bush: Thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --